UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/845,396	04/30/2001	Wayne L. Randell	32423/82536	2724

7590   04/28/2009

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EXAMINER
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ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3692	

MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
04/28/2009	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

DETAILED ACTION

Note: This supplemental Office Action is being submitted because the previously

submitted Office Action was inadvertently missing the signature of the Supervisory

Patent Examiner. Examiner apologizes for this extra correspondence as a result of that

oversight. Nothing within the content of the Office Action has been modified.

Response to Amendment

This Office Action is responsive to Applicant's amendment and request for

reconsideration of application 09/845,396 filed on December 31, 2008 and January 29,

2009.

The amendment contains new claims 117-127.

Claims 1-116 have been canceled.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all

obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham* **v.** *John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148

USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining

obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1.   Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.

2.   Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3.   Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4.   Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

Claims 117-127 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over US Patent 7,206,768 B1 to deGroeve et al. (further referred to as deGroeve), and further in view of US Patent 6,363,421 B2 to Barker et al. (further referred to as Barker).

Regarding claims 117-120 and 122-127, deGroeve discloses a process for online invoice presentment and processing, and an apparatus (Figure 1) comprising:

Generating at a biller entity a database record, the database record containing a plurality of data elements related to an invoice for a service rendered to a customer entity, the data elements including: an invoice number data element; amount billed data element; date of invoice data element; invoice approval status data element; invoice payment authorization status data element (Figure 5; column 3, lines 45-55; column 4, lines 5-12; column 13, lines 42-58; column 18, lines 45-67; column 19, lines 58-67; column 24, lines 11-29; column 26, lines 18-22 and lines 39-67; column 27, lines 9-25; column 35, lines 2067);

Electronically transmitting a plurality of the data elements from the database to a remote computer unit associated with the customer entity (Figure 1; column 3, lines 45-55; column 16, lines 49-53; column 17, lines 18-59; column 18, lines 4-7);

Receiving at the remote computer unit user credentials data supplied by a user (column 19, line 58 – column 20, lines 7; column 35, lines 34-44);

Processing the data elements with the computer unit and rendering an image of the invoice at a display of the computer unit to provide the user with a visual representation of the invoice (Figures 5, 7; column 4, lines 5-60; column 23, line 65 – column 24, line 42-53; column 25, lines 37-43);

Providing at the computer unit a dynamically adaptable user interface, wherein:

A selection of the first input option indicating that the user at the computer unit has approved the invoice (Figures 7, 15A; column 1, line 61 – column 2, line 3; column 4, lines 25-38; column 4, line 47 – column 5, line 4; column 13, lines 46-58; column 19, lines 62-67; column 23, lines 50-54; column 27, lines 11-25; column 35, lines 20-67); and

A selection of the second input option at the computer unit indicating that the user has authorized payment of the invoice (Figures 7, 15A; column 1, line 61 – column 2, line 3; column 4, lines 25-38; column 4, line 47 – column 5, line 4; column 13, lines 46-58; column 19, lines 62-67; column 23, lines 50-54; column 27, lines 11-25; column 35, lines 20-67); and

In response to selection by the user of the first input option, transmitting data from the computer unit to the database to modify the invoice approval status data element to indicate that the payment of the invoice has been approved (Figure 8; column 26, lines 60-67; column 27, lines 11-17).

deGroeve does not disclose the user interface having at least two selectively deactivatable input options, and selectively deactivating the first input option on the

basis of the user credentials data when the user credentials data indicates that the user does not possess invoice approval privileges; the second input option on the bases of the user credentials data when the user credentials data indicates that the user does not possess payment authorization privileges; the second input option on the basis of information in the invoice approval status data element, wherein the information in the invoice approval status data element indicates that the invoice has not been approved;

However, deGroeve discloses where users are assigned particular privileges and wherein users are permitted to carry out transactions only for which they have assigned privileges (column 4, lines 47-60; column 13, lines 46-58; column 19, line 62 – column 20, line 7), wherein it is desirable to have one party first approve/confirm an invoice before another party authorizes the invoice for payment (column 1, line 61 – column 2, line 3; column 4, lines 33-35; column 27, line 23-25), and further that certain invoices may be viewable only if certain processing steps have been performed on the invoice, specifically that invoices may only be viewable if they have first been confirmed (column 6, lines 56-64).

Additionally, Barker discloses selectively deactivating options on the basis of user credentials data (column 30, lines 45-55). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the invoice approval system by multiple parties wherein users have predefined privilege credentials and wherein invoices are approved in sequence of approve/confirm and then authorize for payment as disclosed by deGroeve to adapt the selective deactivation of inputs on the basis of user credential data as disclosed by Baker. The motivation would be that as deGroeve

provides an order to which invoice approval and authorization must occur, to use the deactivation of inputs as disclosed by Baker such that a user could not act on an invoice out of turn. deGroeve provides a means of preventing such out of turn authorization by limiting the viewing of invoices to those that have been approved such that they are ready for authorization. Providing the deactivation of an approval and/or authorization button based on user credential data would achieve the same ends using similarly known technology.

Regarding claim 121, deGroeve does not disclose wherein the user credentials data conveys a password. However, Barker discloses wherein the user credentials data conveys a password (column 8, lines 45-46). Given the combination of deGroeve and Barker above, it would have been further obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have adapted the use of access control through the use of passwords as disclosed by Barker, the motivation being that passwords are commonly used for user identification and access control and would provide for an efficient means of identifying a user authorized for various functions and where deactivation of inputs may be required as disclosed by Barker.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 117-127 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection. The claims as presented in the amendment were new and therefore new grounds of rejection have been issued.

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication should be directed to Jennifer Liversedge whose telephone number is 571-272-3167. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday, 8:30 AM - 5 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Kambiz Abdi can be reached at 571-272-6702. The fax number for the organization where the application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

/Jennifer Liversedge/
Examiner, Art Unit 3692

/Kambiz Abdi/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3692